



THIS MEETING WILL BE WEBCAST ON THE [CITY'S PUBLIC YOUTUBE SITE](#) (CITYWATERLOO) AND MAY BE TELECAST ON PUBLIC TELEVISION



COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Monday, May 5, 2025

Closed Meeting: 2:00 PM

Public Meeting: 6:30 PM

Councillor Wright in the Chair

1. **DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**
2. **CLOSED MEETING**

Recommendation:

That Council hold a closed meeting for the purposes of considering the following subject matter:

- a) the security of the property of the municipality or local board (Security Matter update);
- b) labour relations or employee negotiations (employee survey);
- c) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose (disposition of city owned lands); and,
- d) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board (potential disposition of city-owned lands).

COUNCIL MEETING WILL RECESS AND RECONVENE AT 6:30 PM

3. **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

4. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

5. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

That the previous meeting minutes be approved.

a) [April 7, 2025 – Council Meeting](#) [Page 7](#)

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on April 7, 2025 be approved as printed.

7. CONSENT MOTION

That consent motion item (a) be approved.

a) Title: [Joint Service Initiatives Committee 2024 Update](#) [Page 9](#)

Report No.: CAO2025-015

Prepared By: Michelle Lee

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive CAO2025-015 for information.

8. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT MOTION

9. STAFF REPORTS

a) Title: [Regional Working Group Fireworks Recommendations](#) [Page 16](#)

Report No.: COM2025-007

Prepared By: Nicole Papke

Presentation: Nicole Papke

Recommendation:

1. That Council approve report COM2025-007.

2. That Council approve the three key recommendations to: reduce the number of days and times fireworks are permitted to only the day of the holiday (with two days for Diwali/Deepvali); prohibit the sale of fireworks in Waterloo starting January 2026, and increasing the administrative penalties.

b) Title: **Significant Festivals and Events for By-Law Exemption** **Page 25**
Report No.: CAO2025-013
Prepared By: Scott McGovern and Goretí Cardoso

Recommendation:

1. That Council approve report CAO2025-013
2. That the 2025 designated “Significant Festivals and Events” include:
 - Sun Life Financial Waterloo Busker Carnival
 - The Royal Medieval Faire
 - Kultrun World Music Festival
 - Afro Fest
 - Sun Life Uptown Waterloo Jazz Festival

10. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Formal Public Meeting

a) Title: **Zone Change Application Z-17-20, Draft Plan of Subdivision 30T-17403, Activa Holdings Inc., 550 Roy Schmidt Road and 558 Conservation Drive**
Report No.: IPPW2025-012
Prepared By: Amanda Wyszynski
Ward No.: Ward 3, Lakeshore Ward

Presentation: Amanda Wyszynski

Delegations:

1. Trevor Hawkins, Partner, MHBC Planning
2. Christopher Prest, Resident of Waterloo

REPORT TO FOLLOW

11. CONSIDERATION OF NOTICE OF MOTION GIVEN AT PREVIOUS MEETING

None

12. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mayor McCabe – Federal and Provincial Stimulus Funding to Fast-Track Investments in Infrastructure to Protect Local Economies Motion

Motion:

WHEREAS the United States has imposed tariffs on key Canadian industries, and Canada has implemented counter-tariffs in response; and

WHEREAS tariffs are already disrupting local economies across Ontario, jeopardizing jobs, investment, and economic stability in communities of all sizes; and

WHEREAS we must protect our most vulnerable residents whose housing supports and services may be negatively impacted by an economic downturn; and

WHEREAS infrastructure investments in public transit, Light Rail Transit and improving the electricity grid will address the economic uncertainty created by the US imposed tariffs by creating good, local jobs while also addressing the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS in times of economic uncertainty, federal and provincial governments have historically stepped up with stimulus investments to support municipalities, create jobs, and maintain economic momentum; and

WHEREAS past stimulus initiatives, such as the 2009 Economic Action Plan, which funded 23,000 infrastructure projects across the country in response to the global financial crisis, and the 2020 COVID-19 stimulus plan, which provided critical economic relief during the pandemic, played a critical role in stabilizing local economies and ensuring communities could withstand economic downturns; and

WHEREAS municipal governments are uniquely positioned to drive economic recovery by facilitating major infrastructure projects that create well-paying jobs, attract investment, and improve public services for residents; and

WHEREAS fast-tracking significant municipal projects as stimulus initiatives would help mitigate the negative economic impacts of US tariffs and Canadian counter-tariffs while building critical infrastructure that benefits Ontarians for generations; and

WHEREAS projects such as recreation facility renewal projects, infrastructure adaptation and mitigation projects, light rail transit systems, water distribution systems, and other key infrastructure investments that support economic growth (see appendix), job creation, and sustainable urban development, are ready to serve as engines of economic resilience,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The City of Waterloo Council calls on the federal and provincial governments to introduce comprehensive municipal stimulus strategies to fast-track large-scale investments in infrastructure, housing, transit, state-of-good-repair projects and other critical projects that will help safeguard local economies against the destabilizing effects of US tariffs and Canadian counter-tariffs; and
2. These stimulus strategies also allow for funding of social housing programs including wrap around services for our most vulnerable residents; and
3. Council urges the federal and provincial governments to work in partnership with municipal associations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Ontario Big City Mayors to identify and accelerate key projects such as those listed as follows, to serve as stimulus initiatives, ensuring that economic growth remains centered on protecting the livelihoods and well-being of the people within our Waterloo and across Waterloo Region:
 - **City of Waterloo Beaver Creek Road and Conservation Drive Pumping Stations** - construction of 2 new pumping stations required to enable the creation of over 4,500 new homes in Waterloo.
 - **City of Waterloo Albert McCormick Community Centre Renovation and Expansion** - a significant redevelopment to enhance its energy efficiency, accessibility, and overall functionality.

- **City of Waterloo RIM Park GHG and Accessibility Retrofit Project** – a major renovation of a key community asset that represents approximately 47% of the GHG savings required to meet the City's 2030 GHG emission target (in 2030).

13. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None

14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

15. QUESTIONS

16. NEW BUSINESS

17. ENACTMENT OF BY-LAWS

Recommendation:

That the By-laws listed below be read a first, second and third time and finally passed, numbered sequentially commencing with By-law Number 2025-019 and that the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign them accordingly.

- a) By-law to confirm all actions and proceedings of Council, May 5, 2025

18. ADJOURNMENT



A meeting of the Council of The Corporation of the City of Waterloo was held on April 7, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 100 Regina Street South, Waterloo, Ontario.



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES –

DRAFT

Monday, April 7, 2025

Closed Meeting: 2:00 PM

No Public Meeting

PRESENT: Mayor Dorothy McCabe, Councillor Sandra Hanmer, Councillor Royce Bodaly, Councillor Hans Roach, Councillor Diane Freeman, Councillor Jen Vasic, Councillor Mary Lou Roe

ABSENT: Councillor Julie Wright

Councillor Roe in the Chair

1. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

No disclosure of pecuniary interest was declared by any member of Council at this point in the meeting.

2. CLOSED MEETING

Moved by Councillor Bodaly, Seconded by Councillor Freeman:

That Council hold a closed meeting for the purposes of considering the following subject matter:

- a) the security of the property of the municipality or local board (Unsanctioned Event); and,
- b) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose (Unsanctioned Event, Procurement and Legal Advice); and,
- c) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees (HR Update); and,

- d) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board (potential disposition of city-owned lands); and,
- e) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board (potential disposition of city-owned lands); and,
- f) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization (third party information supplied in confidence).

Carried Unanimously

3. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Freeman, Seconded by Councillor Vasic:

That the meeting adjourn.

(Time: 2:01 p.m.)

Carried Unanimously

READ AND APPROVED, May 5, 2025

Mayor

City Clerk

**STAFF REPORT****Chief Administrative Officer**

Title: Joint Service Initiatives Committee 2024 Update
Report Number: CAO2025-015
Author: Michelle Lee
Council Date: May 5, 2025
File: [File]
Attachments: [Attachments]
Ward No.: All Wards

Recommendations:

That Council receive CAO2025-015 for information.

A. Executive Summary

The Cities of Waterloo and Kitchener have a long standing tradition of working collaboratively to enhance service delivery in their respective communities. Each year a Joint Service Initiatives Committee (JSIC) comprised of CAOs and senior leaders from each of the two Cities meets to discuss existing and new opportunities to work together. Joint initiatives for which cooperation will help the municipalities deliver improved services are identified and reported on to council each year. The JSIC also identifies informal opportunities for collaboration that may also include additional partners. Collaboration on these initiatives helps the Cities to deliver better services, share knowledge and best practices, provide clear and consistent communication, and make efficient use of limited resources. More than 80 joint initiatives have been undertaken since the JSIC was established in 2006.

This report identifies the joint initiatives carried out in 2024 and identifies new initiatives that are underway for 2025.

B. Financial Implications

None

C. Technology Implications

None

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

The work of the JSIC supports the Guiding Principle of Operational Excellence as it aims to make efficient use of resources, provide consistent and clear communication for similar services provided in both Waterloo and Kitchener, and ensure continuous improvement for better service delivery.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

CAO2024-013 Joint Services Initiatives Committee 2023 Update

CAO2023-018 Joint Services Initiatives Committee 2022 Update



**Joint Service Initiatives Committee 2024 Update
CAO2025-015**

1.0 Background

The Cities of Waterloo and Kitchener have a long standing tradition of working collaboratively to enhance service delivery across the two communities. Each year a Joint Service Initiatives Committee (JSIC) comprised of CAOs and senior leaders from the two Cities meets to discuss existing and new opportunities to work together. The JSIC identifies joint initiatives for which collaboration is anticipated to:

1. enhance the capacity of either municipality to deliver or develop a service/program beyond its resources.
2. create service level improvements while maintaining costs and/or producing future opportunity savings.
3. provide operational and/or capital opportunities.

The JSIC also identifies opportunities for more informal collaboration that may also include additional partners. The joint initiatives and more informal collaborations help the Cities to deliver better services, share knowledge and best practices, provide clear and consistent communication, and make efficient use of limited resources. More than 80 joint initiatives have been undertaken since the JSIC was established in 2006.

Staff track the progress of the joint initiatives and provide an annual update to council. This report summarizes the 2024 initiatives that have been completed and describes continuing and new initiatives that have carried forward into 2025.

2.0 Completed Joint Service Initiatives

One initiative was successfully completed in 2025. Key accomplishments are highlighted below.

Vision Zero: Completed, with collaboration to continue as part of ongoing operations and core service delivery

- Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all; this joint service initiative is about adopting the philosophy of Vision Zero and implementing strategies focused on engineering, evaluation and education.

- Both Cities continue to work on the coordination for the 30km/h and 40km/h speed limits along municipal boundary roads, which has led to an overall reduction in operating speeds on most neighbourhood streets.
- Two new videos for pedestrian crossover education and aggressive driving have been developed; the last local Vision Zero video received six (6) million impressions, demonstrating reach to a large audience.
- A Vision Zero update report went to Kitchener Council in May 2024, including the next round of “hotspot” improvements and a list of Vision Zero 2024 construction work; videos were unveiled to Council at that time.
- A total cost savings of \$100,000 is estimated between 2022 - 2024 through cost sharing on research and educational campaigns/videos, and through grant contributions.
- Staff will continue to work collaboratively on Vision Zero safety initiatives as part of core service delivery, (e.g. Waterloo’s Road Safety Countermeasures and Traffic Calming Implementation Plan, presented to Waterloo Council in November 2024) however, this initiative will not be reported on in future JSIC annual reports.

3.0 Continuing Joint Service Initiatives

Three initiatives will continue into 2025. Key accomplishments and progress updates are highlighted below.

Inclusionary Zoning – Affordable Housing: Continuing into 2025

- This multi-year initiative is assessing, through a coordinated approach, the impact and opportunity of Inclusionary Zoning within Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
- Waterloo Council approved the shared Inclusionary Zoning policy framework in June 2024 and directed staff to undertake additional financial analysis and stakeholder consultation before the end of 2024. Kitchener approved the framework in March 2024.
- The Cities hired consultants to conduct a review of current market conditions to assess if implementation should be adjusted or delayed.
- The Cities met with development industry stakeholders to discuss market conditions in October 2024.
- The Cities continue to coordinate the timing of IZ implementation: In December 2024, Kitchener Council passed a resolution to pause the implementation of IZ until January 2026. In March 2025, Waterloo Council passed a resolution to defer the implementation of Inclusionary Zoning and directed staff to return to council in June with an update on implementation timing.
- Waterloo has achieved an estimated cost savings of \$120,000 through joint funding of consultants, peer review, engagement, and financial modeling.

Official Plans Comprehensive Review: Continuing into 2025

- The Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are both undertaking comprehensive reviews and updates to their respective Official Plans. These land use planning strategies will guide future growth and development across the communities, and it is important to pursue them in a coordinated manner and toward consistent frameworks and outputs.
- Policy Planning Staff from the three Cities and the Region meet every other month to share key project updates, learnings and discuss common approaches to several matters, including Official Plan Policies.
- Waterloo released a draft Phase 1 update to the Official Plan in June 2024. Council approved the Phase 1 update (OPA 58) in December 2024 and the City is now awaiting Ministry approval.
- Waterloo is targeting to bring the Phase 2 update to the Official Plan forward before the fall election in 2026. This update will incorporate necessary elements of the ROP into the City OP and will enable the City to repeal the ROP from applying to the City of Waterloo.
- Kitchener launched Phase 1 of its Official Plan update – Kitchener 2051 - through a report to Council in February 2024. Consultant studies being prepared in support of Kitchener 2051 are near completion. In February 2025, Kitchener council provided feedback on draft big ideas, focus areas and initial policy directions to shape Kitchener's new Official Plan. The second phase of community engagement was summarized in a What we Heard report presented to council in March 2025 and culminated in a set of Community Values that are guiding next steps on the plan.
- The Cities continue to work with the Region of Waterloo and other area municipalities on the transition of regional planning responsibilities and policies into lower tier processes and official plans.

Sport and Recreation Joint Services Committee: Continuing into 2025

- Kitchener and Waterloo both liaise with a variety of community, sport and recreation groups and organizations to deliver programming and services to residents. The purpose of this initiative is to bring consistency to the approach of sport and recreation service delivery through information sharing, understanding best practices, joint training and development, and maximizing resources, with the potential for the initiative to expand beyond the two Cities to include other local municipalities.
- Staff identified current or potential shared sport and recreation service areas and identified actions to further explore to enhance collaboration, improve service delivery and consistency (e.g., policy development, event bids, facility coordination, facility studies, fees and charges study, etc.).
- Program managers have agreed to meet regularly throughout the year to share information, new and emerging program trends, and identify areas of opportunity with core service delivery for direct programs.

4.0 New Joint Service Initiative to Begin in 2025:

Fleet Innovation

The JSIC added one new initiative to the formal program, with progress updates to be provided in the next annual report. The Cities of Waterloo and Kitchener will collaborate in the following two areas:

- 1) Fleet Sustainability: Sustainable fleet strategy; shifting to lower GHG emitting fuels using life-cycling and emerging opportunities (e.g. hydrogen) and identifying charging needs across facilities to align with electrification; engaging Enova and opportunities for joint conversations; leveraging grant funding for strategy development and implementation; and
 - 2) Leveraging technology: Leveraging new and emerging autonomous/robotics technologies in fleet for more efficient operations (e.g., Waterloo grass-cutting at cricket pitch; Kitchener's use of robotic line painting at sports facilities); exploring new/other opportunities (e.g., sidewalk snow clearing).
- A kick-off meeting at City of Kitchener was held January 7, 2025 – Q2 meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2025.
 - City of Waterloo is currently undergoing a fuel pump/tank modernization project that will not be completed until 2026. This project will enable better monitoring of fuel usage.
 - Waterloo and Kitchener have been discussing how to collaborate on telematics use and develop standard operating procedures for fleet management. There is a correlation between driver risk management and GHG reduction and reviewing activities relating to behaviour support our initiatives to lower GHG emissions.

5.0 Other Collaboration

Outside of the formal JSIC program, both municipalities collaborate informally with one another and with other area municipalities and the Region of Waterloo as project partners. Recent examples of local municipal collaboration outside the formal annual JSIC program include:

- Full reconstruction of Moore Street South in Waterloo is being planned with financial contributions from Kitchener in exchange for incorporating new sewer infrastructure within Waterloo to serve Kitchener's sanitary needs. Synergies will be realized by combining the full reconstruction of Moore with the installation of new infrastructure requested by Kitchener.
- Coordination of excess soils procurement to establish greater predictability and cost savings with respect to dealing with excess soils.
- Information-sharing on area municipal Strategic Plan progress and implementation including sharing knowledge on approaches to tracking and key indicators as well as looking for collaborative opportunities for the next iteration of the plan.

- Participation in the Reconciliation Action Partnership, a collaborative group of municipal representatives working to coordinate efforts to support Indigenous centred initiatives across Waterloo Region.
- Harmonized approach to green development standards for all urban-area municipalities in the region, in partnership with a wide range of local stakeholders.
- Review of cricket facilities and programming to respond to growing local interest and participation in this sport (also includes Cambridge).
- Consistent public safety communication content and timing to local residents for, e.g., severe weather event declarations and emergency preparedness week.
- Development of guidelines for honoraria and compensation for advisory and quasijudicial committees.
- Government relations and advocacy on a number of projects including delegation meetings at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference and continued advocacy to the Province on legislative priorities.
- Exploration of further regulations on, and alternatives to, fireworks to establish a unified approach that enhances the effectiveness and consistency of policies across our Cities, with the goal of providing safe, environmentally responsible, and community-oriented celebrations.
- Area municipal CAOs identify broader collaboration opportunities to improve service effectiveness and efficiency for citizens, with an emphasis on enhanced collaboration between the Region and local municipalities.



STAFF REPORT
Municipal Enforcement Services

Title: Regional Working Group Fireworks Recommendations
Report Number: COM2025-007
Author: Nicole Papke, Director, Municipal Enforcement Services
Council Date: May 5, 2025
File: N/A
Attachments: None
Ward No.: City Wide

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report COM2025-007.
2. That Council approve the three key recommendations to: reduce the number of days and times fireworks are permitted to only the day of the holiday (with two days for Diwali/Deepvali); prohibit the sale of fireworks in Waterloo starting January 2026, and increasing the administrative penalties.

A. Executive Summary

This report will provide Council with the recommendations and findings related to the sale and use of fireworks from the area municipalities working group, as directed by City of Waterloo Council in October of 2024.

A public survey was conducted showing support for more restrictions related to fireworks. The working group also gathered information from a municipal scan.

Key recommendations for regional alignment include reducing the number of days for fireworks, reducing the hours during the permitted days, increasing fines and beginning in January of 2026, limiting the sale of fireworks.

Staff will return to Council at a later date with an updated Fireworks by-law for Council approval.

B. Financial Implications

None

C. Technology Implications

None

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

Complete Community by supporting regulations around fireworks to improve neighbourhood interaction, safety and relationships

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

Integrity to provide a well-considered and diligent decision-making process around the use of fireworks.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

COM2021-025 Fireworks By-Law Update Sept 27, 2021



Regional Working Group Fireworks Recommendations COM2025-007

Background:

In 2021 Council requested that Municipal Enforcement Services (MES) staff review the by-law provisions associated with community firework displays. Many complaints related to the use of fireworks had been received following the 2021 Victoria Day weekend. At that time, Council supported bylaw amendments based on community comments, a municipal scan looking at best practices related to the timing of fireworks, and environmental considerations. Those amendments permitted fireworks to be used one day before and one day after Canada Day and Victoria Day and during the recognized duration of the holidays Lunar New Year and Diwali/Deepavali. The amendments also required that fireworks only be set off until 11pm on permitted days and would not be permitted when the Fire Chief declared the City of Waterloo a restricted fire zone. Finally, while not in the bylaw, staff also created an updated webpage which provided education related to minimizing human impact for fireworks use near environmentally sensitive areas.

Despite these improvements to the Fireworks By-law in 2021, complaints about noise, the impacts on pets, and other safety concerns, including criminal offences, have been received from community members.

In October of 2024, Council passed a motion directing MES staff to work with area municipalities related to updates to the Fireworks By-law.

Area municipality working group:

MES staff formed a working group with the area municipalities with a goal of aligning fireworks regulations across the three cities of Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo and the four townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Woolwich and Wilmot. The group has met monthly focusing on best practices, sharing insights to local issues, and studying municipal comparators both in Ontario and nationally.

The City of Kitchener By-law Division provided information on outreach they had conducted with municipalities that had banned the sale and use of fireworks. That information is provided in Appendix A.

The working group also engaged with an industry representative from the Canadian National Fireworks Association and studied the effectiveness of other regulatory approaches.

The working group considered options for more consistency within the Region. A full ban on both the use and sale of fireworks was discussed, but not considered as it did not align with all area municipalities.

The recommended approach is to amend the bylaw to reduce the designated days to one day only, set more restrictive time limits, increase the fines, and ban the sale of fireworks beginning in January of 2026.

Public Engagement:

A joint public survey as conducted over a three-week period in the Region, excluding the City of Cambridge which had conducted and completed its own survey in 2023. The survey was promoted on the EngageWR platform from the end of January 2025 to February 10th and advertised through posters with QR codes linking the survey in community centers, arenas and Waterloo Public Library locations.

More than half of those who responded supported stricter regulations and 74 percent of those surveyed supported new regulations around firework safety. Some of the common suggestions for improvements to the current regulations were to reduce days when fireworks are permitted, implement earlier hours, require permits for private fireworks, and allow for fewer days that fireworks can be sold.

Below is a summary of the key findings from the survey which had 3739 participants across the Region including 990 Waterloo residents. The data below is based on Waterloo residents; however, the results were similar across the Region.

While the survey did provide some insight, staff acknowledge that it is not statistically significant based on the number of responses.

General Statements/Preferences:

- 60 % of people had not attended fireworks displays but when asked two thirds said they enjoy public fireworks displays
- 90% of those surveyed had not attended or watched private fireworks with the main reason being safety
- 58% of respondents wanted more regulations
- 21% felt the regulations are just right
- Respondents were split on whether they believe that fireworks bring people together.
- 74 % of respondents support new regulations around firework safety with suggestions including less days when fireworks are permitted, earlier hours, permits for private
- Two thirds of respondent's support banning private fireworks
- One noteworthy comment was the repeated request to bring back more public fireworks, Waterloo residents miss this tradition. This leads staff to believe there is a desire for public fireworks displays.

Industry Perspective:

Members of the working group met with Aleem Kanji, Chief Advocacy Officer of the Canadian National Fireworks Association (CNFA), to gain insight into industry perspectives.

Kanji expressed concerns that bans are not effective, and that education and increased fines and enforcement efforts are the best way to curb complaints outside of the regulations. He cited that many cities that had banned fireworks, such as Caledon, Brampton and Vancouver found that those restrictions had not eliminated the issues, and those bans were being reconsidered. In follow up with those cities with bans, none indicated that they planned to reverse their decisions, however they acknowledged that a reduction in complaints is gradual as public awareness improves.

Kanji did recommend expanding public education efforts through billboards, radio ads and vendor training that was the approach the City of London took. He further recommended enhancing enforcement efforts at peak times.

Education:

Many municipalities, residents and industry representatives have stated that enhanced education is essential to improving compliance with fireworks regulations. The City of Kitchener shared with the working group their 2024 public education campaign. This campaign was extensive and included social media outreach, posters in all community centres, partnerships with cultural groups, temples, community associations and colleges among other measures. Staff from Kitchener acknowledged that despite these efforts, the City of Kitchener received the highest number of fireworks-related complaints to date, thus supporting the need for stronger regulatory measures.

Staff would work with neighbouring municipalities and internal communications divisions to expand public awareness and other community engagement.

City of Waterloo Fireworks complaints and impacts:

Year	Total
2022	112
2023	66
2024	104

Additional complaints typically occur on the August civic holiday weekend and the September labour day weekend there are no permitted days for. It should be noted that some fireworks calls may be categorized as general noise and not captured in these statistics.

There are impacts to receiving additional calls have impacts on the broader community including overwhelming the Waterloo Regional Police Dispatch and increasing the wait time for police non-emergency calls.

There are numerous safety concerns around the use of fireworks that include:

- Fireworks being used as a weapon and shot at a people or out of moving vehicles
- Increase in risk to city property when they are set off in parks, on roadways and sidewalks
- Damage to private property, including homes and vehicles
- Fire hazards due to improper use
- Environmental impacts
- Distress to pets, wildlife and those experiencing PTSD or auditory sensitivity
- Carelessness from those using them
- Safety to users and those in surrounding areas

Public Fireworks Events:

The City of Waterloo does not have a permitting system for private fireworks outside of the designated days. Permission is available through Waterloo Fire Rescue for display fireworks and involves an application process to ensure safety and compliance with regulations. A licensed pyrotechnician is required to supervise all display fireworks shows.

The City of Waterloo hosts a community picnic in Waterloo Park each year that includes a drone show, an alternative to a display fireworks show.

Neighbourhoods and other groups are permitted to apply for a display fireworks permit should they wish to host an event.

Fireworks are not permitted at all if the Fire Chief declares the City of Waterloo a restricted fire zone.

Recommendations for amendments to the City of Waterloo Bylaw:

1. Reduce the number of days fireworks are permitted and further restrict the timing on those days:

Staff are recommending to further restrict the number of days that fireworks are permitted around holidays. This reduction would only allow for the use of fireworks on the actual date of the holiday (i.e. Victoria Day or Canada Day) or a designated day during the Lunar New Year and Diwali/Deepvali. Further to this, staff recommend a 2-hour window for each holiday when the use of fireworks would be permitted on the designated days. This time window would be adjusted for the time of year to align with the approximate sunset time.

The current Fireworks bylaw states that fireworks are permitted between dusk and 11pm on the following days:

- Such days that constitute the recognized duration of the holiday known as the Lunar New Year
- Victoria Day- the day before and after

- Canada Day- the day before and after
- Such days that constitute the recognized duration of the holiday known as Diwali/Deepvali

The proposed changes would state:

- Lunar New Year from 8:00pm-10:00pm
- Victoria Day from 9:00pm-11:00pm
- Canada Day from 9:00pm-11:00pm
- Diwali/Deepvali from 8:00pm-10:00pm

There would only be one day permitted for the designated days with the exception of Diwali/Deepvali where two days would be permitted for celebration to recognize that differences in calendar dates vary due to time zones and based on consultation with local community members. Only Waterloo and Wilmot permit fireworks on the Lunar New Year and there are no plans from the other municipalities to add this holiday. Kitchener, Cambridge and Wilmot only permit fireworks for one day of Diwali. North Dumfries, Woolwich, and Wellesley do not permit fireworks on Diwali in their current by-laws and do not plan to add this holiday.

2. Prohibiting the Sale of Fireworks

Municipalities, under the authority of the *Municipal Act 2001*, may prohibit and regulate the sale of fireworks and the setting of fireworks. Staff are recommending that the sale of fireworks be prohibited in Waterloo. The working group discussed this as a measure to reduce access to fireworks and require individuals to plan the purchase and use of fireworks, rather than purchasing them impulsively.

The current fireworks bylaw permits the sale of fireworks seven days preceding each of the permitted days. There is currently no specific business licence requirement for businesses who wish to sell fireworks, although temporary sales from trailers do require a Temporary Vendor Licence. In 2024 there were 4 temporary vendor licences issued to vendors selling fireworks from trailers.

To ease in the transition and consider inventory that some businesses may already have, staff are recommending the ban on sales begin in January of 2026. This would also provide adequate time for public education on the change. The working group acknowledged that some residents may still obtain fireworks online or purchase from other municipalities and territories, however this would require advance planning and proof of age for online purchases and is expected to gradually decrease local usage over time.

3. Increasing Administrative Penalties

To improve compliance and enhance enforcement, staff are recommending that Council consider increasing the administrative penalties for fireworks related infractions. Currently fines are \$400 per violation, with \$800 for a second offence. Staff are recommending that fines be increased to \$1000 for the first offence and \$2000 for subsequent offences.

In exceptional circumstances, staff could issue a summons requiring an individual to appear in provincial court with the potential of a higher fine being imposed by a Justice of the Peace. It is recommended that the maximum fine under the Provincial Offences Act be set at \$25,000 for an individual and \$50,000 for a corporation.

Appendix A- Municipalities that have banned use and sales of family fireworks.

Municipality	Comments	Year
Brampton	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: nuisance and safety</p> <p>1st year complaints increased but year 2 complaints decreased by 22%</p> <p>Lessons learned: increasing fines, expand education and host City-led cultural events</p>	2022
Caledon	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: nuisance and safety</p> <p>Complaints decreasing, and they overestimated how many issues they thought they would have</p> <p>Lessons learned: continue with education and find alternative events for cultural groups</p>	2022
Milton	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: complaints</p> <p>Reduction this year for fireworks calls only 17 for 2024</p> <p>Lesson learned: build strong relationships with partners in police and fire</p>	2023
Vancouver	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: nuisance to people and animals, safety risks, fires, and costs over 1.5 million to the municipality</p> <p>Year 1 there was slight decrease in calls, but in 2024 there were only 40</p>	2020
West Vancouver	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: wanted to address environmental concerns (fire risks, dry weather), PTSD and animals</p> <p>Year 1 not a large decrease but it is going in the right direction</p> <p>Lesson learned: safety element is the most important piece for education</p>	2023
Woodstock	<p>Ban includes sales and display</p> <p>Reason: Public Safety and Noise complaints</p> <p>Year 1 went from 50 complaints to 1</p> <p>Lesson learned: education and ban of sales is key to limit ability of customers to easily obtain</p>	2024



STAFF REPORT
Economic Development

Title: Significant Festivals and Events for By-Law Exemption
Report Number: CAO2025-013
Author: Scott McGovern and Goreti Cardoso
Council Date: May 5, 2025
File: N/A
Attachments: Appendix A – Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017)
Ward No.: City Wide

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report CAO2025-013
2. That the 2025 designated “Significant Festivals and Events” include:
 - Sun Life Financial Waterloo Busker Carnival
 - The Royal Medieval Faire
 - Kultrun World Music Festival
 - Afro Fest
 - Sun Life Uptown Waterloo Jazz Festival

A. Executive Summary

In 2023 council approved revisions to the Significant Festivals & Events Policy A-017. The policy defines selection criteria for common by-law exemptions and service-based support for Affiliated Organizations planning significant festivals and events within the City of Waterloo. This report is being brought forward to council to identify and approve the significant festivals and events for 2025.

City-led events are already exempted from applicable by-laws and thus do not need to be included in this report.

B. Financial Implications

The exemptions to the Business Licensing By-law #2023-105 will result in a waived revenue of approximately \$798.75 for Municipal Enforcement Services. This estimate is based on five Significant Festivals and Events in 2025 that are eligible for business licensing fee exemptions (\$159.75 based on the 2025 fee schedule – Vendor Market License).

The exemptions to the Noise By-law 2010 - 073 will result in a waived revenue of approximately \$2,060.80 for Municipal Enforcement Services. This estimate is based on five Significant Festivals and Events in 2025 that are eligible for Noise By-law fee exemptions (\$412.16 based on the 2025 fee schedule – Fees and Charges By-law 2024 – 095).

C. Technology Implications

None.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

The designation of Significant Community Festivals and Events supports the direction and goals within corporate and community plans such as the Official Plan, the Culture Plan, and the Economic Development Strategy. It emphasizes the important role festivals and events play in quality of life and supports the Culture Plan priorities of investing in arts experiences in vibrant public spaces.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

CAO2016-004	Significant Festivals and Events Report (June 13, 2016)
CAO2017-008	Significant Festivals and Events Report (April 3, 2017)
CAO2018-010	Significant Festivals and Events Report (May 7, 2018)
CAO2019-013	Significant Festivals and Events Report (March 25, 2019)
CAO2021-008	Significant Festivals and Events Report (March 22, 2021)
CAO2022-002	Significant Festivals and Events Report (March 21, 2022)
CAO2023-002	Significant Festivals and Events Report (March 20, 2023)
CAO2024-002	Significant Festivals and Events for By-Law Exemption (April 22, 2024)



Significant Festivals and Events for By-Law Exemption CAO2025-013

BACKGROUND

In 1996 the need arose to create a designation of Waterloo Significant Community Events. At the time, it was found that some larger events required annual By-law exemptions and additional supports from the City in order to continue a high caliber and exciting line up of activities for our community.

The designation of “Significant Community Festivals” was developed in staff report R&L 97-14 – Significant Community Festivals and was approved by Council on May 7, 1997, and later updated in 2007.

In 2015 council approved a new Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017) that provides clear criteria to determine which events are eligible for designation. To ensure that the list of designated festivals remains current, the Significant Festivals and Events Policy provides a process for evaluating the designation of festivals and events on an annual basis. As a part of this policy, staff brings a list of designated festivals and events forward to Council for approval each year by way of a staff report.

In 2023, council approved changes to the Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017) (Appendix A) to clarify the policy’s purpose surrounding bylaw exemptions, to remove City-led Festivals and Events from the policy, to remove neighbourhood-led Festivals and Events from the policy, and to update terms and names of applicable departments and divisions.

DISCUSSION

Assessment Criteria

Significant Festivals and Events are delivered by an Affiliated Organization and conform to the Criteria for Significant Festivals and Events Designation outlined in the Significant Festivals and Events Policy A-017. In addition to being Affiliated Organizations, these festivals and events qualify for designation as “Significant Community Festivals and Events” because they:

- have developed as community initiatives;
- are supported by local artists, businesses and media;
- rely on community volunteers in the planning and delivery of the events;
- are free or have a nominal charge;

- take place in the City of Waterloo;
- are open and inclusive; and
- provide the community an opportunity to come together.

Designated Significant Festivals and Events

For 2025, staff recommends the following be designated as Significant Festivals and Events:

- Sun Life Financial Waterloo Busker Carnival (August 21-24, 2025)
- The Royal Medieval Faire (September 20, 2025)
- Sun Life Financial Uptown Waterloo Jazz Festival (July 18-20, 2025)
- Kultrun World Music Festival (July 11-13, 2025)
- Afro Fest (July 19, 2025)

These festival and events require specific by-law exemptions including exemptions to the Business Licensing By-law 2023-105 and the Noise By-law 2010 - 073.

Benefits of Community Festivals

Continued support of community festivals and events through the By-law exemptions outlined in the Significant Festivals and Events Policy will result in a number of community benefits. Festivals contribute to both the economic and social health of cities by providing opportunities for inclusion, engagement and celebration and by contributing to an overall sense of community vitality. Festivals also have a direct economic impact. An estimate of this impact can be calculated using the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's TREIM (Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model) tool.

The above Significant Festivals and Events in Waterloo had an estimated attendance of estimated 94,267 in 2024. With the conservative assumption that at least one-fifth of attendees (18,853) were not directly from Waterloo region, the TREIM model estimated that the affiliated Significant Festivals in Waterloo in 2024 generated approximately \$9,204,947 in direct spending within our region.

This spending further translates to:

- \$4,684,145 in total GDP locally;
- \$2,342,878 in Waterloo labour income;
- a potential 79 jobs created in our region; and
- up to \$55,916 in municipal taxes locally.

Existing Significant Festivals and Events in Waterloo have great potential to grow over the next five years due to projected population increases, density plans within the city and investment in public spaces outside the uptown core. As festivals and events in Waterloo grow in the coming years, implementation of the Significant Festivals and Events Policy

will continue to provide a framework for ongoing municipal support through By-Law exemptions.

CONCLUSION

The process outlined in the Significant Festivals and Events Policy is an effective way for the City of Waterloo to support the growth and success of major festivals and events, while providing support for event organizers and not overburdening staff or council with frequent exemption requests.

Significant festivals and events help to ignite the local economy both directly and indirectly. They lay the groundwork to inspire new and emerging festivals to develop and grow in our community, as well making Waterloo an even better place to live and to visit.

Appendix A - Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017)

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Significant Festivals and Events**
Policy Category: **Administration Policy**
Policy No.: **-A017**
Department: **Chief Administrative Officer**
Approval Date: **June 15, 2015**
Revision Date: **March 20, 2023**
Author: **Lakyn Barton and Scott McGovern**
Attachments:
Related Documents/Legislation:
Key Word(s): **Festivals, Events, Noise**

POLICY STATEMENT:

Significant festivals and events are a substantial economic and cultural driver in the City of Waterloo.

Supporting significant festivals and events in the City of Waterloo through policy and internal assistance will help to strengthen our existing cultural assets and provide capacity for future festivals and events to develop in Waterloo.

The categorizing of Significant in this policy is only to distinguish which festivals and events are to access applicable by-law exemptions (Section 3.0). Community festivals and events that do not need by-law exemptions may not be deemed 'Significant' in terms of this policy, however that does not diminish their importance to the community.

PURPOSE:

This policy seeks to streamline recurring and common by-law exemption needs for affiliated community-led festivals and events by defining selection criteria.

DEFINITIONS:

Affiliated Organization: a community organization that works collaboratively with, and is formally recognized by the City of Waterloo in a manner that is consistent with the Community, Culture and Recreation Services Affiliation Policy (2010).

Affiliation Service Agreement: a formal written agreement between the affiliated community organization and the City of Waterloo that specifies the mutual responsibilities and benefits to the respective parties.

Mandatory Policy, *Municipal Act*: No

Policy Administration Team, Review Date February 16, 2023

Corporate Management Team, Review Date February 23, 2023

Interdepartmental Events Team: a team that provides guidance on the planning and delivery of festivals and events led by staff in the City of Waterloo Economic Development Division and including representatives from:

- Waterloo Regional Police Services
- Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario
- City of Waterloo Communications (Corporate Services)
- City of Waterloo Community & Neighbourhood Services (Community Services)
- City of Waterloo Fire Rescue Services (Community Services)
- City of Waterloo Fleet & Procurement Services (Corporate Services)
- City of Waterloo Municipal Enforcement Services (Community Services)
- City of Waterloo Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services (Community Services)
- City of Waterloo Transportation Services (Integrated Planning and Public Works)
- City of Waterloo Planning (Integrated Planning and Public Works)

SCOPE:

This policy applies to festivals and events managed by Affiliated Organizations which meet the criteria outlined in section 1.0 and are supported by City staff.

This policy does not include sporting groups, neighbourhood organizations and non-affiliated organizations within its scope or events not designated by council as Significant Festivals and Events.

This policy is not related to the Letters of Significance required for events by the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario. Festivals and events without the designation of Significant in terms of this policy, may still apply for a Letter of Significance from the City of Waterloo for an application to the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario.

This policy does not apply to festivals and events delivered by the City of Waterloo. The City is exempt from its own by-laws.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be posted on the City of Waterloo intranet. Staff will be advised of the adoption of this updated policy via direct distribution to event delivery and By-law related personnel in all departments.

POLICY:**1.0 Criteria for Significant Festivals and Events Designation**

The following criteria are to be used by the Interdepartmental Events Team to determine which activities are recommended to council for Significant Festival and Event designation each year.

Significant Festivals and Events must be delivered by an Affiliated Organization and conform to the following criteria:

- 1.1 Attendance: Attendance figures indicate the measure of the support the festival or event has within the community
 - City or Regional focused events will have 1000 or more attendees.
 - Events not meeting these criteria shall be considered on a case-by-case basis in light of their benefit to the community.
- 1.2 Funding model: Cash and in-kind support from the business community and private sector indicates support from the wider community.
 - Festivals and events shall demonstrate financial support from a minimum of two (2) sources.
- 1.3 Community Involvement: Festivals and events should be primarily organized and operated by volunteers.
- 1.4 Location: Activities must be planned to occur in the City of Waterloo.
- 1.5 Longevity and history: Although not a major factor in determining the significance of a festival or event, sustainability over time is an indication of community support. This factor is of use in rating an existing festival or event seeking to relocate to the City of Waterloo.
 - Organizations must operate successfully for three (3) years before they can be considered for Significant Festival or Event designation.
- 1.6 Celebrations and engaging programs: The programming must have elements of significance or uniqueness to offer to the community.
- 1.7 Cultural: Festivals and events must have an arts and/or culture focus. This can range from the inclusion of local artists to the celebration of an aspect of the community of Waterloo.
- 1.8 Quality of Life Benefits: Festivals and events must provide opportunities for community engagement, cultural expression, and celebration.
- 1.9 Economic Impact: Festivals and events must demonstrate economic impact through its contribution to community vitality, support of local artists and/or businesses, or attraction of visitors from outside of Waterloo.
- 1.10 Inclusivity: Festivals and events must demonstrate reasonable measures to make their events inclusive and open to all members of the public.
- 1.11 Accessibility: The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 requires the City of Waterloo to provide programs and services that are accessible and inclusive. Significant Festivals and Events must demonstrate reasonable measures to make their events accessible for all.

2.0 Adding or Removing Designation Status

- 2.1 Organizations wishing to pursue a new Significant Festival or Event designation should express their interest in writing to their assigned city staff liaison no later than October 1 for a festival or event occurring in the following calendar year.
- 2.2 Economic Development Staff will compile the list of eligible festivals and events for review by the Interdepartmental Events Team and will present the list to Council for approval.
- 2.3 By December 31 of each year, all new applicants will be informed in writing of the Interdepartmental Events Team recommendation and informed of the scheduled report to council date regarding designated Significant Festivals and Events.
- 2.4 Existing designated Significant Festivals and Events will be reviewed by the Interdepartmental Events Team annually. Events abiding by duties assigned to the responsibility of festival or event organizers (see 4.0 below) shall be carried forward annually or written into Affiliated Service Agreements as per 2.5 below.
- 2.5 Affiliated Service Agreements will reflect designation status and will be reviewed upon subsequent service agreement renewal.

3.0 City Supports

- 3.1 The designation of Significant Festival and Event status allows for fee exemption from Noise By-law No. 2010-076, as amended: Exemption until 11p.m. on scheduled event dates.
- 3.2 The designation of Significant Festival and Event status allows for fee exemption from Sale and Use of Fireworks By-law No. 06-030, as amended: Exemption from permit fees for designated festivals and events. Organizations, however, must still obtain permit.
- 3.3 The designation of Significant Festival and Event status allows for fee exemption from Comprehensive Business Licensing By-law 2014-085, as amended: Exemption from business license fees for designated festivals and events. Organizations, however, must still obtain a business license.
- 3.4 The designation of Significant Festival and Event status does not allow for exemption from Open Air Fire By-law 2011-124. However, the Open Air Fire By-law 2011-124 does not cover ceremonial fires, which are permitted and can be addressed by a staff liaison.

4.0 Responsibility of Festival or Event Organizers

Presenters (Organizers) of Significant Festivals and Events must:

- 4.1 Maintain accounts in good standing with the City of Waterloo.
- 4.2 Complete and obtain necessary permit and licensing documentation within the timeframe outlined in the applicable By-laws.
- 4.3 Provide the City of Waterloo with estimated attendance numbers following the event each year for records.

- 4.4 Make all reasonable attempts to avoid public nuisance complaints during their festival or event.
- 4.5 Advise staff of any significant changes in their festival or event format or programming.
- 4.6 Affiliated groups must comply with all requirements of their Service Agreements.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.